DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 639 JC 020 791

AUTHOR	Hindes, Victoria
TITLE	Campus Diversity Climate Survey.
INSTITUTION	Shasta Coll., Redding, CA.
PUB DATE	2002-00-00
NOTE	12p.; This research study was also conducted by Feather River College.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Age Groups; Community Colleges; *Cultural Pluralism; Disabilities; Diversity (Institutional); *Diversity (Student); Gender Issues; *Institutional Environment; Minority Groups; Sexual Orientation; Student Characteristics; Two Year College Students; *Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*California

ABSTRACT

In order to be responsive to the changing demographics of the emerging community college student population, and in an attempt to answer the Chancellor's Office's call to discover how community colleges serve the diverse needs of students, Shasta College, California, collaborated with Feather River College, California, to conduct a study that would lead to the discovery of common themes. During fall 2000, Shasta College contacted 107 community colleges to gather information on the methods that other colleges used to collect data regarding student equity, diversity, and success issues. Thirty-two colleges responded. Of the 32, only 6 had developed their own questionnaire containing diversity and student equity questions. The 6 sample surveys were useful in developing a model that could be easily replicated and validated. Once a survey was developed, validated and revised, the eight participating institutions (including Shasta and Feather River) throughout the 10 California Community College regions were asked to distribute surveys beginning spring 2001. Group administered surveys were most successful, with a 53% completion rate, compared with a 10% rate for mailed surveys. Of 4,646 surveys disseminated, 2,007 were used. Participants responded to 53 statements regarding the college environment. Highlights of results are presented in 4 figures. (NB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 470 639

CAMPUS DIVERSITY CLIMATE SURVEY

A Research Study Conducted by

Shasta College and Feather River College

Primary Investigator

Victoria Hindes, Ed.D.

Research Team

James Crandall
Monte Murphy
Maureen Armentrout
Paul Thein
Ken Hart, Ed.D.
Jeanette Velasquez

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

A This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

V. Hindes

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

TC020791

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Overview of the Study

The Campus Diversity Climate Survey Project began as a small, grass root effort to discover how students relate to one another—how they relate to faculty and staff, and with their environment—but it grew in strength and spirit. Using a survey questionnaire and information from focus groups, this descriptive study identified and provided an illustrative view of community college students' perceptions. The eighteen-month study involved over 2,000 students for the survey and an additional 150 focus group participants from eight participating college campuses across the state—representing the far north, central California and the Bay Area, to southern California regions. The participating campuses included American River College, City College of San Francisco, Feather River College, Gavilan College, Lassen College, Los Angeles City College, Porterville College, and Shasta College. They varied in size from Feather River, a small rural college with 1,993 students to Los Angeles City College, a large urban campus with 25,547 students. The quantitative and qualitative data paint a vivid picture. The participants revealed that they highly appreciate and value the quality of instruction at their college, teaching methods that they can respond to positively, safety on campus day and night, college counselors who are responsive to their needs, and college courses that are offered at times that are convenient to their schedule.

Diversity issues also played an important role in the participants' educational experiences. They commonly agreed that the following are highly important to them: that instructors treat students of diverse backgrounds with equal respect; that instructors encourage women to participate in class as much as men; that all students regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation have an equal chance of reaching their goals; that they value making friends with students of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds; and that they have found

their college to be a positive and supportive educational environment for the pursuit of an education.

Background and Need for the Study

To be responsive to the changing demographics of the emerging community college student population, and in an attempt to answer the Chancellor's Office's call to discover how community colleges serve the diverse needs of students, Shasta College collaborated with Feather River College to conduct a study that would lead to discovery of common themes.

During Fall 2000, Shasta College contacted 107 community colleges to gather information on the methods that other community colleges used to collect data regarding student equity, diversity, and student success issues. Thirty-two colleges responded. Of the thirty-two, only six colleges had developed their own questionnaire containing diversity and student equity questions. The majority of the colleges did not have a campus diversity climate survey but used a standard student satisfaction survey developed by an external or commercial source. The six sample surveys were useful in developing a model that could be easily replicated and validated.

Once the survey was developed, validated, and revised, the eight campuses (including Shasta College and Feather River) throughout the ten California Community Colleges regions were asked to distribute the surveys beginning Spring 2001. The participating institutions mailed or group administered the surveys. Group administered surveys, by far, was the most successful way to collect data, with a 53% completion rate and only an average completion rate of 10% for mailed surveys.

The purpose of the survey was to identify students' perceptions of the campus climate by indicating the importance of, and agreement with, statements describing how faculty, staff and the educational processes serve the needs of its students, and how the students relate to one

another and to the college environment. Focus group interviews were completed at all participating colleges. The focus groups provided a better understanding of the participants' perceptions of each other and the faculty, and the campus climate. Additionally, the interviews permitted greater depth and allowed the researchers to obtain more complete data. The interviews also gave researchers an opportunity to explore underlying factors, which are too elusive to grasp through straightforward survey questions.

Two types of data collection were used for this study: survey questionnaire and focus group interviews. The most extensive data was collected through group administered and mailed survey questionnaires. Focus groups were conducted both in the spring and fall of 2001 through Spring 2002. These were conducted in person by trained focus group facilitators. At least two focus groups were conducted at each participating college, with five students in attendance at each group. The largest focus groups were held at Shasta College, with twelve students present each time. The largest groups were the most difficult to facilitate and record. A focus group facilitator asked a total of twelve questions.

The focus group interviews served to provide additional insights and also to supplement the survey. The questionnaire was used primarily because of the fairly large sample population, also because it was the most efficient and convenient way to obtain data from students in the shortest amount of time and over the farthest geographic distance. Common themes within the body of information were sought and analyzed. Data collection through interviews also was selected because this provided a qualitative description of the sample. The researchers were interested in thoughts expressed through words in order to gain meaning and better understanding of how students defined "diversity," how they described their relationship with one another and with faculty, and what they perceived as positive and negative experiences on

campus. Collection of the data from all the participating colleges was completed in February 2002.

The results of the Campus Diversity Climate Survey study suggest that students' perception of the effectiveness and quality of education is closely related to the behaviors of staff, faculty, and administrators. Further, the results suggest that students associate the quality of services with their perceptions of the campus. Often, they regard positive and negative experiences based on satisfaction with services. The findings in this study indicate that to improve student satisfaction with services, colleges must prioritize such services as counseling; and to enhance the quality of teaching, instructional delivery must be engaging and multicultural.

While other spirited efforts to identify and actively address the needs of California's "new student population" have been addressed in the past, studies that specifically investigate what role equity and diversity issues play on college campuses still need to be further explored. Therefore this study is also intended expand the current literature by providing an illustrative view of students' perception regarding what works and doesn't work for them on their college campuses. In planning retention strategies, the data could be useful, given the fact that participants seem to define positive or negative experiences based on how they relate to faculty, staff, and administrators on campus.

This study may also be significant in providing colleges with information that would enable their staff to decide how to develop or improve the delivery of academic and student support services and also to broaden teaching methods so as to reach students at all levels of ability and from diverse backgrounds. Such fundamental knowledge would assist colleges in the decisions about how best to meet the needs of the new student population. The findings in this study can be applied in two ways: first, quality of instruction and student services plays a vital

role in shaping students' perceptions about their campuses. Second, in prioritizing student needs, colleges must place a strong emphasis on ensuring that the institution will meet the students' basic needs such as safety, parking, and teacher quality.

Data Analysis

The objective of the study was to report data returned from interviews and completed surveys submitted by students randomly selected from a cross section of the campus population from eight participating colleges. A total of 2,000 surveys were disseminated to seven colleges, and 2,646 surveys were distributed to students at Shasta College. Only completed surveys were included in the total analysis. At least two focus groups were conducted at each participating college campus. Of the total 2,139 surveys received, a total of 2,007 were complete and used in this study. Participants were asked to respond to the importance and agreements with 53 statements describing how the faculty, staff and college processes/services serve their needs, and also how the they relate to one another and to the college environment.

The surveys were scanned using a Panasonic high-speed scanner then processed and verified using optical mark recognition software. The data was then transferred into an Excel spreadsheet. The data was then compiled into charts and was reviewed and interpreted. The examination of the survey and focus group data occurred in four stages:

1. Scoring and tabulation: Responses from participants who answered all the questions on the survey were scored and tabulated. No Response to a specific question was tabulated separately. Frequencies and percentages were used to examine the differences in the importance and agreements among the sample population on dependent measures developed from questions on the student survey.

2. Development of meta-matrix: The basic purpose of developing the meta-matrix is for inclusion of all relevant data. In this study, the matrix was developed directly from the survey questionnaire and focus group interview questions. The data comprised demographic information, the responses to the survey questions and the responses to the interview questions.

3. Clustering of data: The focus group interview questions produced qualitative data; the taped responses were transcribed in written form. Responses were then analyzed by reading them several times to look for key words.

4. Development of themes: Patterns and themes that emerged from those readings were carefully noted. Words that appeared repeatedly were noted as key words, and frequency was recorded and was used to cluster data, which then led to the development of themes.

The results indicate that the top five agreement statements all refer to valuing diversity and a positive campus environment. "My instructors treat students of diverse backgrounds with equal respect," ranked number one in agreement among participants, but twelfth in importance. However, "I have found my college to be a positive and supportive educational environment for the pursuit of an education," ranked number five in agreement but sixth in importance. The following table demonstrates this:

Figure 1

Five Highest Agreement Statements				
Rank	**Statement (#)**	**Mean Avg.**	**Importance Mean Avg.**	**Importance Rank (From highest to lowest 1 - 53)**
1	#43 - My instructors treat students of diverse backgrounds with equal respect.	3.67	3.73	12
2	#10 - My instructors encourage women to participate in class as much as men.	3.65	3.48	38
3	#48 - All students, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation have an equal chance of reaching their goals at my college.	3.64	3.75	9
4	#52 - I value making friends with students of other cultural and ethnic backgrounds.	3.57	3.43	42
5	#44 - I have found my college to be a positive and supportive educational environment for the pursuit of an education.	3.51	3.76	6

Of the five lowest agreement statements, involvement in organized student activities ranked number one and ranked 52 in importance to students. However, number three in the rankings indicates that they did not agree their college counselor was responsive to their needs.

They also indicated that they did not agree that they received adequate assistance in obtaining information on student scholarships. This is reflected in the following chart:

Figure 2

Five Lowest Agreement Statements				
Rank	**Statement (#)**	**Mean Avg.**	**Importance Mean Avg.**	**Importance Rank (From highest to lowest 1 - 53)**
1	#36 - I am involved in organized student activities at my college.	2.18	2.75	52
2	#42 - College personnel do not respond to students in a fair and objective manner.	2.29	3.61	22
3	#2 - My college counselor was responsive to my needs.	2.45	3.79	3
4	#27 - I received adequate assistance in obtaining information on student scholarships.	2.52	3.68	18
5	#25 - My instructors need to provide me with more up-to-date information in the subject they teach.	2.62	3.58	29

Three out of the five most important statements were fairly evenly distributed. All five statements referred to instruction, safety, and course schedules. Participants indicated that most important to them was the quality of instruction at their college; however, it ranked 29 in agreement. It is interesting to note that number four in importance referred to, "My college counselor was responsive to my needs"; however, it ranked 51 in agreement. This is shown in the following chart:

Figure 3

Five Most Important Statements				
Rank	**Statement (#)**	**Mean Avg.**	**Agreement Mean Avg.**	**Agreement Rank (From highest to lowest 1 - 53)**
1	#19 - The quality of instruction is excellent at my college.	3.81	3.25	29
2	#15 - My instructors use teaching methods that I respond to positively.	3.81	3.29	37
3	#14 – I feel safe on campus, day and night.	3.79	3.22	25
4	#2 - My college counselor was responsive to my needs.	3.79	2.45	51
5	#31 - Courses I need are offered at the times that are convenient to my schedule.	3.77	2.76	48

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The top five least important statements addressed mobility on campus, student activities, comfort level, and good service at the cafeteria. Although students indicated that it was not important to them to feel comfortable in class with someone whom they knew was gay, lesbian, or bisexual (#3), this statement ranked 24 in agreement—reflecting that participants agreed that they feel comfortable. The following table indicates the five least important statements:

Figure 4

Five Least Important Statements				
Rank	**Statement (#)**	**Mean Avg.**	**Agreement Mean Avg.**	**Agreement Rank (From highest to lowest 1 - 53)**
1	#11 - I have had difficulty getting around campus.	2.21	2.79	47
2	#36 - I am involved in organized student activities at my college.	2.75	2.18	53
3	#34 - I would feel comfortable in class with someone whom I knew was gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	2.91	3.29	24
4	#13 - The Cafeteria staff provided me with good customer service.	3.24	3.22	32
5	#37 - The assessment process was a comfortable experience for me.	3.32	3.05	40

Because this study investigated students' perceptions of their college and the campus environment, the researchers also sought to understand from students' perspectives, how they defined diversity, what their views were regarding being in an environment with diverse people, and what positive and negative experiences they may have had on campus. Data from the focus groups provided a qualitative description of the sample. The qualitative method met the objectives of the study. Additionally, the focus group interviews permitted the researchers more complete data.

The quantitative and qualitative data discussed in this report reflect a common and recognizable feature: Students reveal that what they value and appreciate the most is to have

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

their **basic needs** met. A positive campus climate to them means quality instruction, quality services, and a having safe campus. The results of the study provide the foundation for developing or fine tuning key support services. Further, they reveal that students appreciate and value support services programs and caring staff/faculty. Their definition of a positive or a negative experience is shaped by their relationships with faculty and staff. Caring or non-caring behaviors by faculty and staff affect the participants' view of the overall campus environment. Knowing that students have these basic needs assisted the researchers in understanding how they define "Campus Diversity Climate." While other researchers might have approached this study differently—organizing the data and labeling themes of perception in other ways—the existing structure served these researchers' purpose.

Conclusion

This study is not meant to be an exhaustive treatment of research methods. The use of qualitative dimension, along with a survey instrument, was an effective method to make sense of diverse views, which shape the participants' understanding and perceptions. The study addresses the participants' diverse views and perspectives, which shape their understanding of the campus environment. It makes two primary contributions. First, it identifies what students value most. Second, the qualitative data that provided themes of perceptions regarding diversity give an illustrative definition of the role of faculty and staff in shaping the students' negative and positive experiences. The study showed that the campus environment is at its best when students' basic needs are met and when faculty and staff demonstrate caring behaviors. While this is something that most educators and administrators already know, this also further reveals that problems do exist in these areas, and students' basic needs are not being met.

Data from the focus group interviews showed that the participants had a clear idea that support services affected their retention and persistence in college. Participants noted that programs that provide direct services to students such as EOPS/CARE and Student Support Services (TRIO) Programs helped shaped their opinions about the quality of services provided by the college. Participants frequently described their relationship with support services programs in positive terms The opinions ranged from expressing gratitude/appreciation for existing services to suggestions for more availability –access, quantity, and more varied services. The information regarding students' perceptions about counseling services provided the most interesting data on services.

While students indicated that they appreciated the support they receive from the counseling staff, they expressed dissatisfaction with the advice they received from counselors. Given the fact that they consider counseling a highly important service, an implication might be that students consider that basic needs such as counseling, quality instruction and safety are the primary components of positive campus climate. Barriers to student success may occur if quality services in these areas are not provided. Further, their descriptions and examples of the ways in which faculty and staff demonstrated caring or non-caring behaviors shaped their definition of a positive or negative environment. Thus, the behaviors of these service providers are equally important to students in their attempt to understand the characteristics of a positive campus climate.

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: Campus Diversity Climate Survey

Author(s): Hindes, Crandall, Murphy, Armentrout, Hart, Velasquez, & Theis

Corporate Source: Shasta College

Publication Date: July 2002

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

☑

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

☐

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

sample

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

☐

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, → please

Signature: Victoria A. Hindes	Printed Name/Position/Title: Victoria A Hindes, Director of College Advancement & Grants
Organization/Address: Shasta College, 11555 Old Oregon Trail, PO Box 496006, Redding CA 96049	Telephone: 530 245-7338 FAX: 530 225-3533
	E-Mail Address: VHindes@shasta.cc.ca.us Date: 11/4/02

III. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY INFORMATION (FROM NON-ERIC SOURCE):

If permission to reproduce is not granted to ERIC, *or*, if you wish ERIC to cite the availability of the document from another source, please provide the following information regarding the availability of the document. (ERIC will not announce a document unless it is publicly available, and a dependable source can be specified. Contributors should also be aware that ERIC selection criteria are significantly more stringent for documents that cannot be made available through EDRS.)

Publisher/Distributor:
Address:
Price:

IV. REFERRAL OF ERIC TO COPYRIGHT/REPRODUCTION RIGHTS HOLDER:

If the right to grant this reproduction release is held by someone other than the addressee, please provide the appropriate name and address:

Name:
Address:

V. WHERE TO SEND THIS FORM:

Send this form to the following ERIC Clearinghouse:

University of California Los Angeles
ERIC Clearinghouse for Community Colleges
3051 Moore Hall
Box 951521
Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521

However, if solicited by the ERIC Facility, or if making an unsolicited contribution to ERIC, return this form (and the document being contributed) to:

ERIC Processing and Reference Facility
4483-A Forbes Boulevard
Lanham, Maryland 20706

Telephone: 301-552-4200
Toll Free: 800-799-3742
FAX: 301-552-4700
e-mail: info@ericfac.piccard.csc.com
WWW: http://ericfacility.org

EFF-088 (Rev. 2/2000)